

The Williamite Episcopalians and the Glorious Revolution in Scotland

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This study examines the reign of William and the rôle played by those episcopal clergy who can be described as Williamite. Scant attention to the Williamites has been paid in historical accounts, which have concentrated on the relationship between the episcopalians and Jacobitism, and on William and Mary's presbyterian support as the main determinants of episcopacy's downfall at the Revolution.¹ A succinct statement of the Williamites' position from the episcopalian viewpoint was made by J. T. F. Farquhar, who wrote of the

“Orange Episcopalians, that is to say men who with more or less intensity and intelligence held to the Catholic order of the Church, and yet unlike their Bishops were quite content to accept the accomplished fact of William's sovereignty, and even to rejoice in it”.²

The discussion therefore concerns a body of clergy whose political and ecclesiastical beliefs appear to have been at odds with those of the Jacobites who have loomed larger in the historiography of the Revolution.

The Williamites' eventual failure was ascribed by Farquhar to the fact that

“between William's political necessities on the one hand and the Jacobite unanimity of the Bishops on the other, there was no organisation and no long continuance possible for such a body”.³

This assessment correctly identifies the refusal by the bishops and most of the clergy to acknowledge William and Mary as sovereigns

¹ G. Grub, *An Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, iii (1861), 301-302; D. H. Whiteford, “Jacobitism as a factor in Presbyterian-Episcopalian Relationships in Scotland”, *RSCHS*, xvi (1969), 129-49; B. Lenman, “The Scottish Episcopal Clergy and the Ideology of Jacobitism”, in *Ideology and Conspiracy: Aspects of Jacobitism 1689-1759*, ed. E. Cruickshanks (Edinburgh, 1982), 36-47.

² *A Sermon Preached to the Clergy of Aberdeen, April 12th, 1692*, ed. J. T. F. Farquhar (Edinburgh, 1901), 5.

³ *Ibid.*

as one of the most important factors in shaping the church settlement, because it enabled the presbyterians to promote themselves as the sole loyal supporters and guardians of the Revolution. Both episcopalian Jacobitism and the political conditions of the Revolution have been examined since Farquhar wrote, but insufficient attention has been paid to the relatively small but influential groups of episcopal clergy who avowed loyalty to William and Mary and who appear to have been willing to remain in their parishes, if the establishment had allowed them to retain their episcopal church principles. This particular contribution briefly discusses the nature and significance of the Williamite episcopalians' response to the Revolution.

That greater attention has been accorded to the Jacobite or nonjuring clergy is the result partly of the historical perspectives brought to bear on this fraught episode of Scottish church history. The Whig tradition perceived clerical Jacobitism, the injustices of the Restoration period and presbyterian principles as sufficient justification for the abolition of episcopacy and the deprivation of nonjuring parish clergy in 1689, which cleared the way for the presbyterian settlement from 1690. From the opposite viewpoint, the Jacobites' loyalty to the Stewart cause and consequent loss of benefice and office was seen as proof of their religious and political integrity. Recently particular attention has been paid to Jacobite ideology and to the episcopal clergy's belief in James as their divinely ordained sovereign, to whom absolute obedience was owed, notwithstanding his Roman Catholicism.⁴ As custodians of the triple doctrines of non-resistance, passive obedience and indefeasible hereditary succession, whose chief and very powerful medium was the pulpit, the Scottish episcopal clergy have been characterised as

“the most significant single group of men creating and transmitting articulate Jacobite ideology in this period”.⁵

Evidence of their fierce Jacobitism abounds; for instance during their initial reaction to the political changes of 1689 it was observed of them that they

“preached King James more than Christ as they had been accustomed to take passive obedience more than gospel for their text”.⁶

One of the main sources for the Jacobites' activities, statements

⁴ Whiteford, “Jacobitism”, pt. 1, 93-94; Lenman, “Scottish Episcopal Clergy”, *passim*.

⁵ Lenman, “Scottish Episcopal Clergy”, 36.

⁶ H. Mackay, *Memoirs of the War carried on in Scotland and Ireland 1689-1691* (Edinburgh, 1833), 76-77.

and beliefs are the libels laid before the privy council. Against the minister of Cortachy in Perthshire it was typically alleged that in preaching he “several tymes vented most treasonable and seditious doctrines”, attacked the government for overturning law, and declared

“that it was accompted religione of old to preach up obedience to the supream magistrat but not so now, but on the contrair actually rebellione was accompted religione and to depos and dethron is acompted a dutie”.⁷

A common theme running through the libels gives support to the argument that many episcopal clergy felt themselves bound by their oaths of allegiance to King James. It was said of a minister in the presbytery of Dumbarton, for example, that he

“does daylie incouradge people to dissoune the authority of his present Majestie, and does so farr impugne the same that he affirmes seing he hade sworne alledgance to King James he cannot give obedience to King William’s authoritie”.⁸

Although they emanated from hostile presbyterians, the speeches reportedly made by the libelled episcopal clergy form a substantial, vivid and easily accessible body of evidence, which broadly reflects their views. Together with the evidence of more active resistance to the Revolution by clergy acting as chaplains to the Jacobite forces and in other capacities, their stated opposition to William and Mary is well attested.⁹ The extreme presbyterian Earl of Crawford concluded that although

“some of them may be more reserved in their way than others, all of them are of the same inclinations and have dis-served our King’s interest more than the army that hath been in the fields in opposition to us”.¹⁰

In some respects, however, the Revolution church settlement resembled not so much a pitched battle as a protracted series of skirmishes and guerilla encounters, in which presbyterians wielded their secular and ecclesiastical authority in an effort to dislodge recalcitrant episcopalian incumbents from the 600 or so parishes in which they were entrenched when presbyterian church government was legally restored in June 1690. To evade legal citations the

⁷ *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland 1689* [hereafter *RPC*], 3rd series, xiv (Edinburgh, 1933), 447-49.

⁸ *RPC*, xiv, 369-70.

⁹ Whiteford, “Jacobitism”, 132-35; T. N. Clarke, “The Scottish Episcopalians 1688-1720” (Edinburgh, Ph.D. thesis, 1987), 36-49.

¹⁰ *Leven and Melville Papers*, ed. W. L. Melville (Edinburgh, 1843), 248, Crawford to Earl of Melville, 10 Aug. 1689.

nonjurors exchanged pulpits and supplied the places of their deprived or deposed brethren. Sympathetic heritors permitted them access to churches by withholding the keys instead of surrendering them to the newly reconstituted presbyteries and synods, and occasionally forcible resistance to presbyterian planting of the churches occurred. Such tactics delayed the planting, especially in Perthshire, Angus and Mearns, throughout the north-east, and in many areas of Moray and Ross. Not until about 1720 did the established church gain possession of all the parishes.¹¹

The contribution of recent studies of episcopalian Jacobitism has been to transform the picture of the clergy as doomed losers in the process of presbyterian domination into a better understanding of how influential they were nonetheless, both locally and in national politics.¹² However, this has not led to any serious examination of those clergy who were willing to accommodate themselves to the Revolution dispensation.¹³ Their apparent invisibility can be attributed not only to the Jacobites' pre-eminent rôle, but also to the nature of their aims and their lack of cohesive secular support. Broadly they sought comprehension within the post-Revolution established church, either as fully integrated members of a new church polity forged from the episcopal and presbyterian systems, or as ministers of parishes acting with their presbyterian brethren for the purposes of church discipline and the suppression of vice. Some lay observers of the radical drift of the convention and the parliament in 1689-90 saw in comprehension the only means to accommodate the conflicting interests which threatened to tear apart Scotland's political and religious fabric.¹⁴ Yet this solution suffered from the obvious danger that the moderation and compromise which comprehension entailed were exposed to the abundant extremism of both ecclesiastical camps.

As Sir Francis Scott of Thirlestane commented in January 1689,

“the fatalitie of Scotland is in this, our divisions are ever in extreems nor have we either bishops or presbyterians lyke those in England”.

While believing that a union within the Church of Scotland, which had the support of leading Anglicans would be more advantageous than either of the alternating systems of church government during

¹¹ Clarke, “Scottish Episcopalians”, 42-72; A. L. Drummond and J. Bulloch, *The Scottish Church 1688-1843* (Edinburgh, 1973), 8-9.

¹² B. Lenman, *The Jacobite Risings in Britain* (London, 1980), 56-67.

¹³ D. S. Hopkirk, “A Study of Accommodation Movements between Presbytery and Episcopacy in the Seventeenth Century in Scotland, England and Ireland” (Edinburgh, Ph.D thesis, 1946) surveys only the parliamentary history of accommodation proposals, 1689-95.

¹⁴ *Leven and Melville Papers*, 1, 84.

the previous 40 years. However, he doubted that so good a thing could succeed,

“nor can so general a good co-operat with privat interests, the last being once satisfy’d will prove so many partisans to withstand the first”.¹⁵

Scott’s judgment points to the fact that an even greater obstruction to comprehension than clerical extremism was the political ambition of rival nobles, gentry and others, and the shifting allegiances which they formed. These have been examined by P. W. J. Riley in a study which leaves few shreds of integrity attached to the Scots nobility. In effect, he argues, the episcopalian and presbyterian causes were taken up for expedient reasons by laymen whose religious sympathies, where they were evident, sometimes lay with the opposite persuasion.¹⁶ Therefore as descriptions of political alignment the terms episcopalian and presbyterian party or interest did not necessarily match the ecclesiastical and religious beliefs which each seems to denote. Thus the Master of Stair, who as joint secretary from 1691 gave some encouragement to the Williamite episcopalians, was a presbyterian in the so-called “episcopalian” interest, which was opposed to his colleague the Earl of Melville, a genuine presbyterian who headed an interest which was both politically and ecclesiastically presbyterian.¹⁷ The use of ecclesiastical issues as pretexts for political action arguably disguised the actual subordination of religion to politics. This trend was reinforced at the Revolution by the apparent indifference to the rapid and fundamental changes in church government on the part of many of the political nation, whose pliant religious consciences facilitated political fluidity.

Such considerations necessarily complicate and qualify any conclusions which can be drawn from the well-known broad regional pattern of strong support for presbytery in the west and south-west and a corresponding upholding of the episcopalian tradition in the north-east, with a variegated spectrum of confessional allegiance in between and elsewhere. Contemporary calculations of the respective extent of support for episcopacy and presbytery were mostly based on the understanding that episcopalianism’s strength lay with the nobility and gentry, whose social and political influence presented an obstacle to the presbyterians who had less landed support, though far more among

¹⁵ NLS, MS 7011, fo. 149v, Sir Francis Scott to Earl of Tweeddale, 15 Jan. 1689.

¹⁶ P. W. J. Riley, *King William and the Scottish Politicians* (Edinburgh, 1977), 58-59, 77 n. 66.

¹⁷ Clarke, “Scottish Episcopalians”, 75-76; Paul Hopkins, *Glencoe and the End of the Highland War* (Edinburgh, 1986), 208.

the common people of certain shires and in the burghs.¹⁸ However much it simplified the real situation, this description corresponded with King William's perception of Scotland's religious make-up in 1689, after he had been disabused of the notion that presbyterianism commanded near-universal support.¹⁹ It was precisely because it helped form his preferred solution to wider political problems, of striking a balance between religious interests, that the question of the numerically and socially superior body of episcopalians was important in the context of comprehension proposals.

William's rôle in the church settlement was crucial, and therefore it is worth examining briefly both his attitude towards the episcopalians and the general policy he adopted towards the complying episcopalians in particular. His essentially pragmatic attitude has been shown to consist in part of a waiting on the outcome of events.²⁰ William hoped, as Bishop Compton explained to the Bishop of Edinburgh,

“that if you will undertake to serve him to the purpose that he is served here in England, he'll take yow by the hand, support your Church and order and throw of the prespiterians”.²¹

It was not until the Scots nobles' and gentry's allegiance crucially shifted away from King James, and the bishops' intransigence manifested itself that it became clear to William that episcopacy could not be sustained intact. His instructions to Melville as commissioner to the estates had already indicated a willingness to accept a moderate presbyterian church government if a majority wished it. Yet offers were allegedly even being made to the bishops shortly before parliament abolished their office.²²

At this point William was in the uncomfortable position of having alienated the Scottish episcopalians and seriously alarmed the Church of England, which in turn affected his attempts to bring about a comprehension of the English dissenters within the established church. He held latitudinarian views, believing that forms of church government were indifferent, and that religious uniformity should prevail where possible.²³ Given his tolerant

¹⁸ T. Maxwell, “Presbyterian and Episcopalian in 1688”, *RSCHS*, xiii (1959), 33-35; cf. Lenman, “Scottish Episcopal Clergy”, 39-40.

¹⁹ Grub, *Ecclesiastical History*, iii, 296-97; cf. L. Glassey, “William II and the Settlement of Religion in Scotland, 1688-90”, *RSCHS*, xxiii (1989), 321-25.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ SRO, CH12/12/1833, Bishop Rose to Bishop Campbell, 22 Oct. 1713. Printed versions, e.g., Glassey, “William II”, 321, differ slightly from the original here.

²² *Leven and Melville Papers*, 2, cited by Glassey, “William II”, 324; Clarke, “Scottish Episcopalians”, 15-16.

²³ A. I. Dunlop, *William Carstairs and the Kirk by Law Established* (Edinburgh, 1967), 61-63.

views it was therefore natural that he regarded comprehension as a desirable goal, based on a suitably modified presbyterian system. As Major General Mackay wrote, William regarded presbyterian government as

“the fittest for the nation but it is also his earnest desire that it may be made as suppertable to those whom sem to dissent from it, that even they may fall in lyking with it, and so the Kingdom becum one body”.²⁴

In view of William’s desire to create balanced political support, his express refusal to persecute alleged enemies of the kirk was arguably also an expedient signal to both lay and clerical episcopalians that he would not abandon them.²⁵ Subsequent measures indicate the reality of his concerns.

The king’s comments on the draft act for settling church government in 1690 plainly indicate that he envisaged a form of presbytery which would neither assert its divine right “as the only Government of Christ’s Church in this Kingdom”, nor restrict membership if its government only to presbyterian clergy. Instead ministers willing to subscribe the confession of faith and catechisms and to own and submit to the government of the church, being sober in their lives, sound in doctrine, and qualified with gifts for the ministry, should be admitted. The king also wanted to ensure that the “Visitors for purging the Church” were moderate men approved by his commissioner to the general assembly, and that he himself was consulted over the assembly’s sittings. In addition to these remarks on existing proposals he made clear his desire

“that such as are of the Episcopal perswasion in Scotland have the same Indulgence that Dissenters have in England, provided they give security to live peaceably under the Government, and take the Oath of Allegiance”.²⁶

This coda indicates William’s hopes for a dual settlement similar to that attempted in England the previous year, when bills for comprehension and toleration were tabled together.

In assessing the significance of comprehension schemes in Scotland it is important to consider the parallels and contrasts with the contemporary English situation. During the Restoration period ecclesiastical policy in England and Scotland was largely aimed at containing dissent by indulgence or coercion, rather than achieving integration in the sense which comprehension implied. Yet by the

²⁴ *Scottish Ecclesiastical Journal*, 7 (1857), 22-23, Mackay to Ludovic Grant, 4 Dec. 1690.

²⁵ Glassey, “William II”, 324-25.

²⁶ *Leven and Melville Papers*, 436-38, king’s remarks, 2 May 1690.

late 1680s comprehension was the aim not only of the English high church partly under Sancroft, but was also the natural objective of the latitudinarian divines, such as Tillotson and Tenison, who attained leadership in the English church after the Revolution. Although the prospering comprehension scheme was killed off by a Tory reaction, clerical nonjurancy and convocation's failure to consider the proposals,²⁷ comprehension as a desirable goal remained under consideration during the 1690s among latitudinarian clergy and at court.²⁸ The predisposition of some influential Anglicans towards comprehension was to sustain its importance in Scotland until 1695.

After 1689 the Scottish presbyterians' failure to concede any substantial measure of comprehension to dissenters was compounded by the refusal to grant an indulgence or toleration to the episcopalians until 1695, by contrast with England, where a limited toleration was enacted in 1689. The twin failure of indulgence and comprehension helps explain the bitterness felt by the episcopalians in the 1690s. However, at least until comprehension proposals failed there was evidently a belief among the complying, or pro-Revolution, episcopal clergy that the king's desire for a balanced church settlement offered their main hope, just as for most Jacobites a defiant separatism was the predominant attitude.

What evidence was there to convince William that not all episcopal clergy were rampantly Jacobite? First, there is the evidence of the privy council register, which is so rich in Jacobite utterances, but which is also useful as a means of examining how the response to the proclamation of 13 April ordering prayers for William and Mary revealed Williamite sympathies among a significant minority of those accused of Jacobitism. For example 21 out of the 23 clergy who were assoilzied by the council in 1689 can be identified as declaring that they had obeyed the proclamation.²⁹ Some others whom the council deprived also claimed they had obeyed it. Another group of self-proclaimed Williamites can be identified in the 27 ministers who claimed to have been rabbled or forcibly extruded, 25 of whom also claimed to have the proclamation or to have been willing to obey it, or both.³⁰ Two examples of Williamite views suffice to illustrate the

²⁷ N. Sykes, *From Sheldon to Secker. Aspects of English Church History 1660-1768* (Cambridge, 1959), 85-91; W. Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries. Englishmen and the Glorious Revolution of 1688* (Oxford, 1988), 186-87.

²⁸ H. G. Horwitz, "Comprehension in the Later Seventeenth Century: A Postscript", *Church History*, 34 (1965), 342-48.

²⁹ Clarke, "Scottish Episcopalianism", 27, and Appendix 1, citing *RPC*, xvi, *passim*.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 26, citing *RPC*, xiii-xvi, *passim*.

terms and language in which the deprived episcopalians sought to justify their conduct. First, the minister of Innerwick, near Dunbar, claimed

“he is and ever was verie sensible of God Almightyes mercy to those nationes in delyvering them from the danger of popery and arbitrary government by his present Majestie, the glorious instrument therof, for the preservation of whose persone and government he hes not ceased to pray both before and after his deprivatione”.³¹

A similar view of William as the providential deliverer of the protestant cause was claimed by James Aird, minister of Torryburn, whom the council deprived on 18 October 1689 for not reading the proclamation and uttering prayers against William as an invading tyrant, and on behalf of James as an afflicted prince. Although the council removed him for breaking the law, he asserted that immediately he heard of William’s landing

“I thought and on every occasion said I look’t upon him as ane angel drop’t from heaven in such a crisis of affairs as we were in”.³²

Aird’s acceptance of William as an alternative “darling of heaven” to King James was not necessarily shared fully by his brethren, let alone so fulsomely. Yet it is clear that the complying clergy were prepared to speak out for William’s interest. Major General Mackay, though not himself an episcopalian, observed that despite the presence of many Jacobites, there were

“many ministers in the northern countries well principled and affected to your Majesty’s government, as the means whereof it had pleased God to make use for the defence of his truth against the designs of France”.

The number and identity of these apparently active Williamites has yet to be established.³³

In examining the existence and significance of the Williamites it seems reasonable to make a distinction between them and the Jacobite clergy on the basis of signs of loyalty or otherwise, insofar as these can be accepted as valid evidence. In 1691 five dispossessed episcopalians made a plea to the Duke of Queensberry in terms

³¹ *RPC*, xvi, 95-95.

³² *HMC Hope-Johnstone*, 200, J. Aird to unidentified, 17 Nov. 1691.

³³ Mackay, *Memoirs*, 76-77. But see address by 21 compilers in Moray, 1692, note 64.

which state the problem concisely. They requested him to assist the episcopalian agents in London, and

“to interpose with there Majesties that what generall misrepresentations may be given of the Ministers of the episcopal perswasion yet such may be excepted who manifestlie hath given obedience to the Law and have lived peaceable and have addressed ther Majesties for releife and protection”.³⁴

The problem of course remains that ostensible civil disobedience may well have been practised by pragmatic clergy, just as it was by the laity of whom it was observed in April 1690, that they regarded the oath of allegiance they had taken “as nothing binding”.³⁵ Some evidence of prevarication will be discussed below.

The earliest organised expression of loyalty, as well as the most powerful one, came from the clergy of the diocese of Aberdeen in their address to the king’s commissioner and parliament, tabled on 2 July 1689. It narrated that they had recently testified against popery and

“have generally concurred in rendering thanks to the Divine Majestie for putting so seasonable a Stop to the designes of that Antichristian partie and in praying for King William the great instrument of our deliverance”.³⁶

Such sentiments are more or less indistinguishable from the contemporary Anglican response to the Revolution, by which the majority accommodated themselves to it by invoking divine providence to justify William’s accession to power. Yet little or nothing to justify the episcopalian Williamite cause seems to have been published in Scotland,³⁷ which may indicate a reliance on the spate of English justifications of the Revolution, or arouse the suspicion that there was more expediency than principle in the clergy’s claims for comprehension or toleration. Certainly the presbyterians were quick to accuse compliers of crypto-Jacobitism, but the acid test lay in the episcopalians’ readiness to follow their avowals with real action. On occasion they were found wanting, but their sincerity cannot readily be disproved on the several occasions when they committed themselves to a form of comprehension.

In fact, the credentials of some of the Williamites were

³⁴ SRO, GD224/171/2, fo. 98, copy letter from five ministers to Duke of Queensberry, 22 Oct. 1691.

³⁵ NLS, MS 7012, fo. 5, Countess of Roxburghe to Earl of Tweeddale, 22 Apr. 1690.

³⁶ *APS*, ix, 129-30.

³⁷ Whiteford, “Jacobitism”, pt. 1, 143-49.

impressive. The Aberdeen clergy's address to parliament in 1689 was presented by James Gordon and John Barclay, two of the most senior Aberdeen clergy, who had both fallen foul of the authorities before the Revolution. Like several of his colleagues, Barclay had lost office temporarily over the test act of 1681.³⁸ Gordon had also suffered deprivation for his critical tract, *The Reformed Bishop*, published in 1679, in which he suggested that the bishops should emulate the spirituality and conduct of their predecessors in the early church, and advocated a moderate episcopacy to take account of presbyterian dissent.³⁹ Such a proposal to modify the Restoration establishment accorded with the type of settlement being sought by William in 1689, but parliament's political temper prevented the conciliatory solution proposed by the Aberdeen clergy from becoming legislative reality. The address requested the calling of a free general assembly in order to effect a union of protestant clergy which would secure mutual toleration in remaining points of difference; they also suggested a conference of "judicious and moderate ministers of different persuasions in matters of Church Government", which would concert their differences and propose means of accommodating them.⁴⁰ In this proposal can be detected not only a desire for an equitable union, no doubt tempered with an instinct for self-preservation, but also a frustration with the complete absence of a national synod or assembly throughout the Restoration era.

A national synod had been unsuccessfully advocated then and it is therefore no surprise that among the clergy who accepted the Revolution was Dr John Robertson of the Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh, who had been deprived in 1674 for proposing a synod. It was noted of him and of a colleague (who became a nonjuror) that they "Preach'd once and again against the Pride of Prelates, and the Corruptions of the Church".⁴¹ Other veterans of the attempts to render the Restoration episcopate more acceptable to presbyterians also survived to lend support to the Williamite cause. They included Walter Paterson and James Aird, and Laurence Charteris, professor of divinity at Edinburgh University until he went out over the test. Charteris ended his days as the parish minister of Dirleton, and was instrumental in the resistance to the presbyterians' claims to constitute the national church in the early 1690s.⁴²

³⁸ *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, ed. H. Scott, vi (Edinburgh, 1926), 187.

³⁹ *James Gordon's Diary 1692-1710*, ed. G. D. Henderson (Aberdeen, 1949), 25-26; Clarke, "Scottish Episcopalians", 34-35, 440 n. 130.

⁴⁰ *APS*, ix, 129-30.

⁴¹ Grub, *Ecclesiastical History*, iii, 251; *An Account of the Present Persecution of the Church in Scotland* (London, 1690), 41-42.

⁴² *Fasti*, i, 357, 360; v, 53; Grub, *Ecclesiastical History*, iii, 325-27.

Just as resistance to the test was strong in East Lothian, so too were ministers in the shire prominent in adding their voice to the Williamite episcopalian lobby. William Denune helped organise the southern clergy from his parish of Pencaitland, and among others Bernard Mackenzie, minister of Tranent 1691-95, became an influential agent along with a northern clergyman, Alexander Leask, the deprived minister of Turriff.⁴³

Others in the network of southern clergy which tried to co-ordinate a Williamite episcopalian lobby ought to be mentioned. Dr James Canaries, minister of Selkirk, was a significant figure in the opposition to James's Catholicising policy which led to the toleration of Catholics and presbyterian dissenters in 1687. Revulsion against the excessive exercise of the royal prerogative and the prevailing Catholicism of the Court in the 1680s probably helped some clergy to come to terms with William's claims. In Canaries's case his conversion to Catholicism and subsequent re-conversion seemed to have heightened his protestantism, which he evinced in a sermon published in 1686 as *Rome's Additions to Christianity*. For this act of defiance he was deprived and his bishop, Cairncross of Glasgow, was also removed.⁴⁴ It is worth noting that if a Williamite episcopate could have been constructed, Archbishop Cairncross would seem to have been an obvious choice as a member of it. He certainly hoped that the Revolution parliament would declare his deprivation illegal and uphold his claim to his bishopric, but in the event parliament first refused him and later abolished episcopacy altogether. Cairncross was subsequently appointed to the see of Rapho in Ireland.⁴⁵ One of the problems in tracing the activities of the Williamite clergy is the apparent pragmatism of the leading men. Canaries is a case in point, for he hardly appears in accounts of the period, and has been dismissed simply as a Jacobite agent. In fact there is abundant evidence from his letters and other sources of his crucial rôle in representing and negotiating on behalf of the complying Williamite clergy.⁴⁶

The second important figure who, like Canaries, had a central rôle as an episcopalian agent in the early 1690s was Dr James Fall, principal of Glasgow University. He acknowledged William and Mary, but was deprived of his post for refusing the requisite acknowledgement of presbyterianism during the visitation of the Scottish universities in 1690.⁴⁷ Before his removal Fall was

⁴³ *Fasti*, i, 386; vii, 4-5; vi, 272; Clarke, "Scottish Episcopalians", 30-33.

⁴⁴ *Fasti*, ii, 794; Grub, *Ecclesiastical History*, iii, 285.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; *Fasti*, vii, 324; Clarke, "Scottish Episcopalians", 16-17.

⁴⁶ Dunlop, *William Carstares*, 81; cf. NLS, Wodrow Folio xxvi, fos. 303-31, Canaries to R. Wylie, 1691-92.

⁴⁷ *Fasti*, vii, 396; Grub, *Ecclesiastical History*, iii, 318-19.

probably able to use his friendship with William's confidant Gilbert Burnet, who was appointed bishop of Salisbury early in 1689, first in order to solicit protection for the rabbled clergy, and later to gain redress for those at the sharp end of the privy council's brisk purge in autumn 1689.⁴⁸ The lobby of winter 1689-90 is the first significant example of the wooing of Anglican sympathies after the Revolution, to the extent that the English bishops were reported to have addressed the king on behalf of the Scottish episcopal clergy. Furthermore convocation demanded consideration of "their persecuted brethren in Scotland" as a condition of a favourable attitude towards the establishment's proposed rapprochement with the dissenters over the liturgy, ritual and church discipline.⁴⁹ How far convocation's aggravation over the failure to redress Scottish grievances affected the rejection of comprehension in England is unclear, but the episode showed that Scottish issues to some extent became intertwined with English ecclesiastical politics. Just as William's hopes for comprehension were dashed in England, so his expectations of a Scottish settlement cannot have been strengthened by the episcopalians' complaints of the council's injustices and the failure to reponne illegally removed clergy. It is possible that as this occurred during the interregnum between the eclipse of the bishops and the formal restoration of presbytery, assurances of provision for loyal clergy may have been made to assuage Fall and Burnet. At any rate the lobby failed in its aim, other than to project before an English audience a picture of confessional suffering in a series of polemical pamphlets.⁵⁰

This overall failure helped open the way to the restoration of presbytery in 1690, which set the seal on the rabblings and deprivations, and gave the presbyterians a footing in most parishes in southern Scotland. The Restoration's two most important features were firstly, the placing of church government in the hands of so-called antediluvian presbyterian clergy deprived since 1661, who had survived the flood of Restoration episcopacy, and any ministers and elders they would admit to share power with them. Secondly, lay patronage was abolished and replaced by election by the heritors and elders of the parish.⁵¹ In response to these measures the Williamite clergy sought a share in the government of the church and proposed that the parishes should be free to elect

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 298, 318-19; *Leven and Melville Papers*, 273, 297.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 336; *HMC Hope-Johnstone*, 150, W. Carstares to Earl of Crawford, 7 Dec. 1689.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*; SRO, GD26/8/58, unidentified to J. Fall, 28 Nov. 1689; Riley, *King William*, 37; *Leven and Melville Papers*, 352, Crawford to Melville, 21 Dec. 1689; Clarke, "Scottish Episcopalians", 56.

⁵¹ Grub, *Ecclesiastical History*, iii, 305-306.

their ministers irrespective of their opinions on church government. On both counts they reckoned to outnumber the presbyterians, who for their part saw clearly that in any general assembly they would be outnumbered three to one. In order to impose a pure form of presbytery it was therefore necessary for them to exclude all clergy except those who would accept stringent terms of admission to communion and church government, and to purge the parishes of those deemed to be guilty under the “four heads” of insufficiency, neglect, scandal and error. The rigour and bias with which the church courts and commissions carried out their work of deposing allegedly inadequate and scandalous men inflicted considerable hardship on the episcopalians.⁵²

It also caused anguish for those whose beliefs and instincts drew them to the concept of a national church to which they rightly belonged, though they were denied their place by the ascendant presbyterians. Canaries ascribed most of the presbyterians’ “errors and injustices” to

“this fancy of acting absolutely as a Presbyterian Nationall Church over the Episcopall Clergy”.⁵³

The claim of the sixty-odd antediluvians and their brethren to constitute a true general assembly in anything more than a legal sense was clearly open to doubt when at its first meeting in 1690 only eight clergy and six elders from north of the Tay attended.

Like the privy council’s proceedings, the presbyterians’ exercise of their new powers resembled just procedures, though it was commonly claimed that they constituted themselves as accusers, witnesses and judges in trying the clergy.⁵⁴ A handful of episcopal clergy were received into the church in autumn 1690, but the overall harshness of the general assembly’s two commissions initiated a new cycle of complaints at court. These were encouraged by Viscount Tarbat, a wily episcopalian who had in 1689 proposed a scheme of separate but parallel episcopal and presbyterian church courts within the establishment.⁵⁵ He became the patron of the Williamite clergy, not necessarily entirely for their benefit or to their advantage.⁵⁶ Representations at court yielded some benefit, for from December 1690 until summer 1691 the king put a stop to

⁵² *Leven and Melville Papers*, 187 Crawford to Melville, 23 July 1689: Clarke, “Scottish Episcopalians”, 59-66, 86-89.

⁵³ NLS, Wodrow Folio xxvi, fo. 316, Canaries to R. Wylic, 14 Nov. 1691.

⁵⁴ *Historical Relation of the Late Presbyterian General Assembly Held at Edinburgh* (London, 1691), 13-14; *The Causes of the Decay of Presbytery* (London, 1713), 5-7.

⁵⁵ *Leven and Melville Papers*, 125-27, memorial on the Church by Tarbat [1689].

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 586, 590-91, Tarbat to Melville, 18, 30 Dec. 1690; Clarke, “Scottish Episcopalians”, 97.

the kirk commissions' proceedings twice because he was led to believe that they were acting over-zealously. In February 1691 he recommended first that they unite with episcopalians who owned his government, and were suitably qualified as ministers; second, that those summarily deposed or illegally removed were to be admitted to vacant parishes when called by a plurality of heritors and elders; thirdly, cases of alleged harsh sentences were to be reviewed and redressed.⁵⁷ There is no evidence of what effect this had. Canaries was with William in Holland at his invitation in the honorary post of royal chaplain and clerk of the closet, and it was through him that the king arranged for the complying episcopalians to address the kirk's commissioners. Two addresses, one each from the north and the south, were submitted in terms which the king prescribed. They stated their willingness to own his authority, to join in church judicatories with their presbyterian brethren and to subscribe the Confession of Faith. These addresses were brushed aside on the grounds of the insufficient guarantee of the clergy's orthodoxy and especially of their avoidance of owning and submitting to the established church government.⁵⁸ At the root of their objections lay a deep hostility to the king's erastian prescription of changes to the scope of church government and the fear that these would destroy, or at best pollute, presbytery by admitting episcopalians. In refusing to accept the addresses the commissioners could defend the kirk's purity against the claims of men who were mostly, they conveniently found, under ecclesiastical process and thereby disqualified, while at the same time tacitly rejecting the king's wishes for union.

The seriousness with which William regarded the issue is evident in the holding of a conference in December 1691 following local clashes and further detailed representations by Canaries of individual cases.⁵⁹ During the year Canaries was at pains to stress to the presbyterians, and doubtless to the king also, that the episcopalians were willing to sit with the presbyterians in presbyteries, synods and general assemblies, and to join in church discipline and advancing religion, and yet would not declare a submission to presbyterian church government. He claimed some success in persuading the northern clergy that a limited union on this basis would not encroach on episcopal principles, and declared that about 400 clergy from north of the Tay were willing for

⁵⁷ *Leven and Melville Papers*, 595, Dalrymple to Melville, 13 Feb. 1691; *Calendar of State Papers (Domestic) 1690-91*, 257-58, 414, king to general assembly, 13 Feb., 15-25 June 1691; Riley, *King William*, 63-64.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*; [Gilbert Rule], *A Second Vindication of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1691), preface; *HMC Finch*, iii, 160, 186.

⁵⁹ Hopkins, *Glencoe*, 324-25; Clarke, "Scottish Episcopalians", 88-96.

episcopalians commissioners to act for them in securing it.⁶⁰ William appears to have conceded that for the episcopalians to be pressed on the question of church government would be tantamount to persecution.⁶¹ The thorny question of how ordination and episcopal authority could be organised for the clergy of one half of the proposed comprehensive church, when bishops had no legal standing, was thus avoided, though it was one of the principal obstructions to comprehension.

However, this issue was probably one of the main reasons for the fiasco of the second general assembly in January 1692. The king's programme for the reception of 180 episcopal clergy on the basis of declarations similar to those made to the commissions the previous summer, together with strengthened doctrinal declarations, foundered utterly. Only one minister out of the many who applied for admission was received, and the general assembly resolutely stonewalled on the others. It resulted in a breach between William and the presbyterians who had outfaced him over his cherished scheme for church union, and led to a reshuffle in the administration.⁶² The episode illustrates how the existence of a body of Williamite clergy helps explain the presbyterians' actions in a way which the simple Jacobite model can not.

As part of William's trimming policy the appointment of the latitudinarian James Johnston as conjoint secretary in 1692 raised hopes that he would bring civil and ecclesiastical government to a balance. However, the immediate political and military consequences of the massacre of Glencoe ruled out the settlement of the church by the further legislation which he envisaged.⁶³ Heightened Jacobite activity during 1692 necessitated loyal addresses from Williamites anxious to distance themselves from their Jacobite brethren, and an attempt was made to draw up a general address to the king.⁶⁴ The session of 1693 saw Johnston's first attempt to enforce a settlement on the one hand by imposing penalties on episcopalian incumbents and others who did not apply to be received into the church, and on the other hand by providing "full royal protection" to those who offered to qualify and who applied to the church, but were refused. He aimed at a stroke to cut through Jacobite prevarication and presbyterian obstructiveness. Especially shrewd was the provision for royal protection, which was intended to permit the episcopalians to erect

⁶⁰ NLS, Wodrow Folio xxvi, fos. 318v, 332v, Canaries to R. Wylie, 14 Nov. 1691.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, fo. 326, Canaries to Wylie, 2 Jan. 1692.

⁶² Dunlop, *William Carstairs*, 83-85; Riley, *King William*, 74-75; Clarke, "Scottish Episcopalians", 101-107.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 108-110; Hopkins, *Glencoe*, 356-59.

⁶⁴ Lambeth Palace Library, MS 929 no. 42, address by Moray clergy to privy council, 6 Sept. 1692.

their own synods and presbyteries, a prospect calculated to make the presbyterians reconsider their attitude to the episcopalians.⁶⁵ About 30 clergy complied, but many more were held back by apparent scruples over the nature of the recognition of presbyterian church government and the oaths which were a condition of receiving the benefit of the act.⁶⁶

Exactly why they balked at the oath of assurance is unclear, though it contained explicitly what was only implicit in the oath of allegiance, which they were prepared to take, namely a recognition of William and Mary as *de jure* and *de facto* sovereigns. Certainly they attempted to have the terms of the act changed to the equivalent of the tests of loyalty demanded of the English clergy, who were not faced with an oath like the assurance. Equally certainly there were calculated misrepresentations of the 1693 act to the archbishop of Canterbury and considerable effort by Viscount Tarbat's agents to dissuade the clergy from complying. None of this necessarily adds up to crypto-Jacobitism,⁶⁷ but at the very least it shows, as Johnston himself complained, that Tarbat and his allies had turned the episcopal clergy into a faction and "makes tools of them for privat ends".⁶⁸

Representations to the English church were once again significant, and an indication of the importance attached to their predicament was that both Tory and Whig bishops could broadly agree. Tenison, bishop of Lincoln, proposed protection for the 400-odd compliers and the redress of the illegal extrusions, in an effort to settle the church.⁶⁹ A second conference on the Scottish situation in 1694, consisting of English bishops and nobles, and Scots nobles, could, however, only agree on the protection of the clergy still in possession.⁷⁰ Even this provision was shown to be problematic in the course of 1694 when the kirk's committee for the north declared about 20 ministers in the north-east to be intruders into churches, despite the fact that some had been called in the terms of the king's letter to the kirk in 1691. Some ten ministers were assumed, however, and by 1695 about 40 had been taken in throughout Scotland.⁷¹

⁶⁵ APS, ix, 303, Act for settling the Quiet and Peace of the Church, 12 June 1693; SRO, SP3/1, James Johnston to Earl of Portland, 10 June 1693.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Johnston to Stevenson, 30 June 1693, to Carstares, 11 July 1693, to Portland, 24 June 1693; NLS, Wodrow Quarto lxxxii, fo. 86r, autobiography of John Bell, 1706.

⁶⁷ Clarke, "Scottish Episcopalians", 116-119.

⁶⁸ SRO, SP3/1, Johnston to Earl of Tweeddale, 24 Nov. 1692.

⁶⁹ Whiteford, "Jacobitism", pt. 2; *RCHS*, xvi (1969), 185-87.

⁷⁰ Lambeth Palace Library, MS 929 no. 18, "The Case of the Episcopal Clergie of Scotland" [1694]; Hopkins, *Glencoe*, 379.

⁷¹ New College Library, Edinburgh, MS X 156 3/1, fos. 40-41, list of ministers received into the Church, 1690-95; NLS, Adv. MS 34.7.9, *passim*, list of parish clergy, c. 1689.

The northern clergy's strong representations against the kirk continued and several proposals of accommodation or separation were sent to the English bishops, mostly reiterating schemes already suggested.⁷² These calls for further reform were partly met in the church act of 1695, which ensured royal protection for ministers in possession of churches on taking the oaths of allegiance and assurance, and left it to them and to the established church whether they should apply and be admitted. Those who did apply were automatically deprived, but in practice some 116 ministers qualified themselves. To ensure a good response to his act Johnston recruited one of Tarbat's agents to persuade the clergy into compliance.⁷³ Reverses and gains in William's continental campaign in 1695 may have affected their response by first encouraging and then discouraging the Jacobites. At any rate, this element of pragmatism in the taking or refusal of oaths is one of the complicating factors in assessing Williamite clergy's beliefs. Archbishop Tenison observed:

“Conscience do's not rise and fall according to the weather of the state.”⁷⁴

The church act of 1695 was the high water mark of attempts at comprehension in William's reign, for no further measures were considered necessary, and it seems likely that the ecclesiastical strife of 1693-94 finally convinced William that the two bodies of clergy would never unite. Comprehension was mooted in Queen Anne's first parliament in 1703 but, along with a toleration scheme, was killed off.⁷⁵ In fact toleration for the episcopalians was foreshadowed in the provisions of the act of 1695 for the separate existence of clergy not owning the established church. Indeed, toleration was made desirable by the kirk's exploitation of ambiguity in the act concerning their power to discipline the protected episcopalians, but a full toleration was not enacted until 1712.⁷⁶

In conclusion, what significance can be attached to comprehension schemes which ended largely in failure? Clearly the Revolution settlement in Scotland would have been different if the kirk could have proceeded without attempts being made to curb the

⁷² Clarke, “Scottish Episcopalians”, 125-26, 463-64 nn. 116-17.

⁷³ *APS*, ix, 423, Act concerning the Church, 16 July 1695; *State Papers and Letters Addressed to William Carstares*, ed. J. McCormick (Edinburgh, 1774), 263; Clarke, “Scottish Episcopalians”, 129-32.

⁷⁴ Whiteford, “Jacobitism”, pt. 2, 187-88, quoting Lambeth Palace Library, MS 930 no. 203, Archbishop Tenison to Johnston, 20 August 1695.

⁷⁵ *Draught of an Act for Toleration with a few Short Remarks thereupon* (Edinburgh, 1703); Grub, *Ecclesiastical History*, iii, 345-46.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 363-64; Clarke, “Scottish Episcopalians”, 133-34, 137-38.

exercise of its power and to broaden its base. The Williamite clergy can be regarded as a focal point for both factious and principled opposition to the presbyterian-dominated civil government of the early 1690s, and as a determined but fragmented lobby for a share in the new ecclesiastical establishment. Although most of the complying clergy who remained in possession of their parishes took no part in church government, the exclusion of many clergy from the post-Revolution church not only affected its character, but also the nature of the episcopal communion, which became increasingly divided into Jacobite and complying groups, and broke apart after 1712. The Scottish episcopalians' relationship to the Church of England was also significantly affected by the injustices seen to be inflicted on the Williamites, as well as by the sufferings of the nonjurors. The Anglican sympathies or the presbyterians' foes which played a central rôle in the achievement of toleration in the next reign, were rooted in the desire of some English bishops in the 1690s to salvage a place in the Scottish church for the complying episcopalians by helping to moderate the ascendant presbyterian establishment. Such wishes accorded with William's preference for a broadly based church, and the aspirations of some Anglicans to effect a form of accommodation in England in 1689. Comprehension in Scotland was kept alive as much by continuing Anglican interest as it was made to falter over tests of political loyalty by waverers, and brought to a stalemate over confessional and organisational questions by compliers who could not abandon concepts of episcopal authority. Expediency and principle in the episcopalians' response to the Revolution are difficult to disentangle, yet in a sense which distinguishes them from their Jacobite brethren, the complying or Williamite episcopalians represent a failed part of the Revolution of 1689, rather than part of the counter-Revolution assiduously worked at by the Jacobites.

